

**December 24, 2023 and December 31, 2023**  
**Special Two-Week Edition**



## **The Mystery of Christmas and the Birth of Possibilities**

Christmas as a season in the Christian year may to some seem a lost cause. What energy is left after our typical frantic pre-Christmas festivities? Caught up in the nostalgia of the Christmas spirit, we try to make up for neglect and ineptitude, but in a couple of weeks the Christmas decorations put up before Thanksgiving in our malls will be torn down and little will have substantially changed. Nevertheless, Christmastide, best understood through the metaphor of birth – brings God to us in the midst of all our distortions.

Christmas is a time in the eternal cycle of things to celebrate the mystery of possibilities through the birth of a child. The birth of a child can be a joyful occasion and even if the child is healthy there can still be moments of anxiety. A child represents possibilities, but not certainty. All too often Christmas offers people nostalgia, an escape from the harsh realities of life, rather than the joy-filled experience of new possibilities – but only possibilities amidst the realities of personal life and world history. The Spirit of Christmas is not a drug to numb our senses but a moment to recall that with God everything is possible. During Advent we wait quietly in hope for dreams that grow dimmer with age. At Christmas we experience the eternal promise from God of new possibilities. We are re-born in our hearts and in our history, because of our faith that God has entered human history and become one with us (Emmanuel).

God came and comes to you and me each Christmas because God wants to join us on our journey so that we will never have to fear or feel lost in our wanderings, but always can trust that God walks with us as we move ever toward the realization of God's vision.

The Gospel of John tried to capture the vision God has for this world of ours. As John would explain it, Christmas is a candle in the dark. Jesus was born in dark days; we live in dark days. But somehow in that darkness a little light has been kindled, and nothing has been able to extinguish it. Indeed, its flickering light makes it possible for us to see the outline of new life amidst the darkness of our own lives, to see the outline of a new tomorrow amidst the darkness of the world's evil. And that flickering light, if we concentrate on it, provides us with all that is necessary for walking into the night. John's point is very clear: we need to focus on the good. The problem of evil that most of us worry about is definitely the wrong problem. The really difficult problem isn't why there is any evil in the world, but why there isn't more good in our lives and in the world. That small flicker of good is the Christmas mystery, the mystery of possibility that may grasp us if we don't surrender to secular celebrations of Christmas.

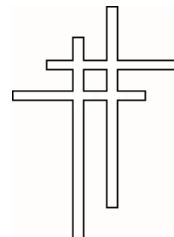
Every Christmas, and every other day, Christ comes to us moving silently without fanfare or trumpet, arriving into the midst of life, yours and mine, in all of its everydayness and clutter and workaday concerns. The impossible possibility, God is always entering our lives and our world to deliver and to save us. The problem is in our perceiving; our faith is fragile. It needs to be refreshed; and so it is, each year through the mystery of Christmas. Have hope!

Have a blessed Christmas my Huguenot Lovelies.

*Jim Sprouse*

## **Please Celebrate Sunday's Message**

Huguenot United Methodist Church is inviting you to our Sunday Morning Worship Service. This in-person service begins at 11 a.m. Please join us and take part in our worship and praise of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



Pastor Jim Sprouse will provide us with the message

***"Thoughts on Christmas Eve"***  
***We hope you will join us!***

## HUMC Nursery

Our nursery caregivers, Rosalie Koch and a volunteer, are at church every Sunday morning and ready to welcome infants and toddler children in the nursery! **Childcare is provided from 9:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**



## Nursery Wishes

The nursery is in need of:

- 1 twin size flat sheet, any color or pattern
- 1 queen size flat sheet, any color or pattern

Thank you,  
Rosalie Koch,  
Nursery Caregiver

## Assisting Families of Inmates

Thank you for all the wonderful gifts you contributed to the children of AFOI (Assisting Families of Inmates). As usual you exceeded all expectations. It was fun collecting



the gifts and exchanging comments with “gifters.” We learned what young people are interested in and now know what Takis are!

Thank you!  
Your Mission Team

## Adult Bible Study/Sunday School

Our Adult Bible Study/Sunday School class will not meet on Sunday, Dec. 24. Please plan to join us on Sunday, Dec. 31. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback regarding our HUMC Adult Bible Study please do not hesitate to contact me.



Gerry Flinchbaugh (804) 314-4817  
gflinchb@gmail.com

## Preschool Pizza Fundraiser

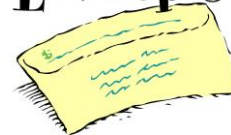
Our preschool has an on-going fundraiser with Marco's Pizza. Just use the code: **HUMCPSAF** when ordering over the phone or online and the school receives a portion from each sale all year long. Participating locations include the Marco's Pizza on Sheila Lane and on Midlothian Turnpike.



## 2024 Offering Envelopes

Our 2024 offering envelopes have arrived and are on the credenza near the entrance. Please pick yours up so you can start using them in January. The new boxed sets include an Initial Offering envelope to help defray the envelope cost, so you can include a donation for them with your January offering. The boxed envelopes for 2023 included some extra envelopes so please discard them at the end of the year since the envelope numbers have changed for some of our members. A few extra sets of envelopes were included with our order. If you did not receive 2024 envelopes and would like a set, please see our church treasurer, Chip Woodall.

## Offering Envelopes



Thanks to everyone who helped make the **Joy of Crafts Holiday Bazaar** a big success! We were able to raise more than \$1,200 for the purchase of fabric and supplies for our projects in 2024. Just this month, we donated fleece hats for homeless residents on a work project, holiday pillowcases for patients at Children's Hospital, and chemo port shirts for cancer patients. Next month, a box of dresses will be on its way to needy girls. Thanks again for supporting Joy of Crafts. For more information, contact Molly Sprouse at [mollysprouse@gmail.com](mailto:mollysprouse@gmail.com).

## Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study will start back on January 4, 2024, and resume our study of Chapter 9 in the book, *Never Alone*, by Max Lucado. **Join us!**



## Make a Joyful Noise!

**Choir practice** has resumed! New members (or those who might be interested) are **WELCOME!** We meet each Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Choir Room. Please contact Connie Salmeri with any questions. (804) 314-6308





## Happy Anniversary!

Fred and Mary Schneider (Dec. 27)  
Lee and Shirley Bradshaw (Dec. 30)

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please call, leave a note or send an email to Elaine so she can include you!

## THE UPPER ROOM

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### Where the World Meets to Pray

Copies of the **January and February** edition of The Upper Room are now available on the greeting table at the front entrance. Please consider making a donation in the labeled box.

Dear HUMC Family,  
Thank you for the support, cards and prayers for the passing of my mother. You are truly a Community of Faith in the good times (like Katie's Baptism last July) and during the difficult.

God Bless!  
Cheryl Reynolds



**Nick Anderson**

**Sylvia Carr**

**Carmen Hoge**

**Stuart Joerg**

**Jon Smith**

**Wayne Taney**

In an effort to keep the prayer requests current, names posted will be removed after 30 days unless requested otherwise.

## CHURCH CALENDAR

**Sunday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve**

11 a.m...Worship

**Monday, Dec. 25 – *Christmas Day!***

**Friday, Dec. 29**

10 a.m...Library Work Session

**Sunday, Dec. 31-1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Christmas**

10 a.m...Adult Bible Study/Sunday School (FH)

11 a.m...Worship

2 p.m...Preschool Parents and Children social gathering on playground

**Monday, Jan. 1 – *Happy New Year!***

**Wednesday, Jan. 3**

7 p.m...Choir Practice (CR)

**Thursday, Jan., 4**

10 a.m...Women's Bible Study (FH)

**Friday, Jan. 5**

10 a.m...Library Work Session

**Sunday, Jan. 7 – Epiphany Sunday**

10 a.m...Adult Bible Study/Sunday School (FH)

12 p.m...Coffee Fellowship following worship (FH)

11 a.m...Worship

**CR** – Choir Room   **FH** – Fellowship Hall  
**K** – Kitchen   **L** – Library   **PR** – Puppet Room

## Upcoming EVENTS

- Tues., Jan. 9 – United Women in Faith Meeting @ 10:30 a.m.
- Fri., Jan. 12 – Feed the Homeless @ 10 a.m.
- Fri. and Sat, Jan. 19-20 – Cub Scout Pack 861 Pinewood Derby (FH)

### Church Office Hours:

Pastor Jim is in the office on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Elaine is in the office each Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. These hours are subject to change on occasion. If you have an article for the **pulse** newsletter, please email it to Elaine **by Wednesday at 10 a.m.**

**Note:** This newsletter and the Sunday Bulletin are posted on the church website by Friday evening.

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